



Building Blocks:

*Creating A
Solid Foundation
For Service-Learning
In Schools*

Learning In Deed

The push for standards-driven school reform is currently focused on raising standards for all children and measuring their attainment through test scores. Educators, parents, and community members also want children to learn to be productive and responsible citizens. Service-learning—community service that is integrated with classroom instruction—helps students become active learners, engage with the academic curriculum, and simultaneously helps develop social, life and career skills, and gives young people the opportunity to meet community needs. There is growing support for service-learning, but much more is needed for all America's students in grades K–12 to have the opportunities to participate in and benefit from service-learning.

Service-learning teachers and others advocates have potential allies in the numerous education organizations. Professional associations (role group and discipline), educational publications, research and development organizations, and curriculum projects can be the building blocks of a strong foundation for service-learning in mainstream schooling. But who are these groups? What are their priorities? What do their publications say about

service-learning? And what are the concerns of teachers, the lynchpins of any successful service-learning effort?

Learning In Deed scanned the education environment to learn the answers to these questions. The news is promising: many educators know and care about service-learning. According to a 1999 study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, 32% of all public schools organize service-learning as part of their curriculum, including nearly half of all high schools. Articles, research projects, training programs, state policies, professional networks, and countless school/community service-learning success stories indicate that service-learning is alive and well in American schools. A competing reality, however, is that service-learning is not a “front burner” issue for many educators, nor does it have a high profile in many professional associations. Until it is, we run the risk of service-learning remaining the province of the committed third, or blowing away in the wind.

“Despite years of attention nationally and in state departments of education . . . all levels of the education system are just beginning to realize how service-learning can benefit many other critical education policy goals.”

A Solution to Education Policy Challenges Education Commission of the States
State Education Leader, Volume 17, Number 3, Fall 1999

Who are the Professional Associations?

Our education scan focused primarily on the professional role group associations—e.g., teachers, administrators—because they represent most K–12 educators in America. The professional associations we reviewed included:

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
- Council of Great City Schools (CGCS)
- Education Commission of the States (ECS)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
- National Education Association (NEA)
- National Parent Teacher Association (NPTA)
- National Middle School Association (NMSA)
- National Staff Development Council (NSDC)
- National School Boards Association (NSBA)

In late 1999, we reviewed journals and other materials and met with association staff from most associations listed here to learn just where and how service-learning appeared. While this scan is not meant to be comprehensive—we apologize if we omitted some important efforts—we hope our findings, a snapshot of the current conditions, educate service-learning advocates about what mainstream education groups are saying and doing, what they know and don't know about service-learning. We hope this booklet gives you ideas for building on existing support, the building blocks, to strengthen service-learning beyond your school and community to states and national partners. In this way, you can create the solid foundation necessary for national acceptance and practice. Use the information in this pamphlet to think about what to do, where to go, and why do it.

Examples of Other Educational Groups

Discipline-based associations:

- National Science Teachers Association
- National Council of Teachers of English
- National Council of Social Studies

Research and development organizations:

- Regional Laboratories
- Eisenhower Science and Math Projects
- National Research Centers

Curriculum projects:

- Facing History and Ourselves
- The Algebra Project
- Insight Science

Whole School Change Projects

- ATLAS Communities
- Expeditionary Learning

Educational Associations' Common Interests

- Student achievement
- High educational standards
- System-wide school reform
- Community/parent support
- Changing demographics
- Violence

What are the Associations' Common Interests?

Student achievement and high standards are top priorities for all education groups. Many have joined together to address common goals. Twelve associations are members of the Learning First Alliance, whose focus is on improving student learning in America's schools. Five associations produced *An Educator's Guide to School-Wide Reform* (1999), an analysis of 24 school-wide, comprehensive reform approaches. Three associations are members of the national

Blue Ribbon Schools Program, which, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education, recognizes schools for their improvement efforts. All the associations are interested in increasing parent and community support for schools, especially in light of the changing demographics of most communities. And, many are concerned about violence in schools and how to prevent it.

How Does Service–Learning Appear In Professional Associations?

Professional associations live through their conferences and other gatherings and their publications. Most produce some kind of publications—bulletins, information briefs, newsletters targeted to specific subsets of members—and many, although not all, publish a monthly journal of articles. Associations host one national conference each year, and often sponsor topical workshops and state conferences as well.

Which Publications Address Service–Learning?

Service-learning has been included in many journals and other association publications. To gauge the level of interest in service-learning, we searched among 11 journals encompassing a broad educational spectrum—from practice to administration to research—whose articles were written by and for educators. The articles generally provide overviews of service-learning, case studies, or analysis of the mandatory versus voluntary service debate. We looked at the number of articles about service-learning, their focus, and themes. The common denominator of most articles is a focus on students, and how their participation in service-learning affects them. In the process, we found service-learning-related articles about student participation, school and commu-

nity relationships, and purpose-centered learning. Among the six years of 11 journals, we found 40 articles about service-learning.

We note that our systematic scan included only these 11 journals. We found other service-learning products (for example, books and booklets) in our visits to associations, and articles in other publications—for example in *NEA Today*—but are sure we did not find everything published. We, and we hope you, will continue to seek coverage in education publications that bring information about service-learning to educators. Below are examples of those associations that have covered service-learning in multiple journals and products.

Publications Searched 1993–1999:

- School Administrator
- Educational Leadership
- Principal Magazine
- NASSP Bulletin
- Middle School Journal
- The American School Board Journal
- Phi Delta Kappan
- Harvard Educational Review
- Educational Researcher
- The Journal of Early Adolescence
- Education and Urban Society

ASCD has been a strong and steady advocate for service-learning. Between 1993 and 1999, nine service-learning articles have appeared in *Educational Leadership*; an *Info Brief on Service-Learning* was sent to members; and several products were published, including a resource book for teachers, *Enriching the Curriculum Through Service-Learning* (Kinsley and

McPherson), published in 1995, and the 1999 *Inquiry Kit on Service Learning*, designed to introduce teacher study groups to service-learning.

Service-learning has also been featured in several NASSP publications. Their *High School Magazine* published a service-learning theme issue in October 1997, and the *NASSP Bulletin* published ten service-learning articles between 1993 and 1999. In addition, in 1997, NASSP and Quest International co-published *Service-Learning*, a booklet that describes a four-step process of preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration. *Breaking Ranks*, NASSP's model for transforming high schools, includes service-learning in its recommendations.

Themes of articles in Education Journals:	Most articles say that service-learning should:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Character and civic development• Implementation issues• Mandatory vs. voluntary debate• Social justice ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet community needs• Integrate with the curriculum• Include student reflection

Who writes Education Articles?

Articles are typically written by association members, other educators, and education researchers. *Education Week* and *Teacher Magazine* are not produced by an association and use a staff of professional journalists. For submission procedures, contact the publication editor, usually identified on the masthead inside the publication.

AACTE has produced two publications on service-learning: *Learning With the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Teacher Education* (Erickson and Anderson), co-published with the American Association of Higher Education, and *Resource Guide for Higher Education* (Rawls and Swick), co-published with the South Carolina Department of Education and the National Dropout Prevention Center.

AASA has published two articles in *The School Administrator*, and is planning a theme issue on service-learning in August 2000.

In all education journal articles about service-learning that we reviewed, service-learning was defined correctly—requiring preparation and connection to the curriculum, meeting a community need, and involving reflection—and provided excellent examples of service-learning in action in schools. Learning In Deed's review of the mass media found that service-learning was often confused with community service requirements.

“Many articles describe successful programs involving real-life experiences that instill both personal and social virtues in students. From these virtues, they contend, academic achievement will also follow.”

Learning In Deed Education Media Report, July 1999

Which Associations House Service-Learning Projects?

- **Project Slate (AACTE)** provides technical assistance and funding to six higher education teacher education programs to increase service-learning.
Contact: Joost Yff
Jyff@aacte.org
- **SEANet (CCSSO)** convenes and represents needs and interests of state service-learning coordinators.
Contact: Nelda Brown
Neldab@ccsso.org
- **Opening Schoolhouse Doors (AASA)** works to increase volunteers in schools.
Contact: Sharon Taylor-Adams
Sadams@aasa.org
- **Compact for Learning and Citizenship (ECS)** develops leadership for service-learning among local and state superintendents.
Contact: Terry Pickeral
Tpickeral@ecs.org
- **Every Student a Citizen (ECS)** is a national study group examining civic education.
Contact: Terry Pickeral
Tpickeral@ecs.org

How to Locate Service Learning Articles

To locate service-learning articles, see the **National Clearinghouse on Service-Learning**, (www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu).

The **Learning In Deed** Web site provides hotlinks to several other organizations. For more information about the professional associations, go to their Web sites and search their menu of options.

What Do Teachers And Administrators Say About Service-Learning?

"Why do it? How are others doing it? Who will do service-learning? How is it communicated? How will it be supported in money, time, etc.? What are the expectations? How is it evaluated...? What opportunities will be created? What is the difference between service and service-learning?"

Middle School Teacher, Learning In Deed focus group on service-learning

Learning In Deed conducted a focus group with building-level educators to assess their awareness of service-learning and their perceptions of obstacles to its implementation. Their voices powerfully express common concerns about service-learning and education in general.

These educators identified four issues as demanding most of their attention: state assessment tests, teacher accountability, school violence, and an increasingly diverse student population. Student assessment is at the top of the list and often drives what teachers do with their students.

"Balancing how I work out a local interest, a local need, a local passion, my students' interest, everything that engages them—how can I honor that? And, at the same time, feeling more and more pressed to cover this particular curriculum and teach these particular skills that are coming down from some state or federal level."

Middle School Teacher, Learning In Deed focus group on service-learning.

At the very least the educators felt that preparation, collaboration, and consensus are critical to make service-learning viable. Not only is funding needed to initiate a service-learning program, to provide transportation, training and materials, they pointed out, but equally vital are teacher and staff buy-in and parent and community support. They want curriculum and assessment tools in place and an agreed upon philosophy that addresses the benefits of service-learning both to the students and the community. They are concerned about liability and how this would affect gaining union and school committee support.

What Matters Most for Educators about Service-Learning?

- Time to plan, implement, and evaluate
- Teacher, administrator, and community buy-in
- Liability issues
- Integration with curriculum
- On-going teacher training
- Union support
- Financial support
- Leadership
- Materials

Sustaining the Momentum: How You Can Get Involved

We can and must do more. The benefits of service-learning need to be offered to all students. You can reach out to spread the message of service-learning in local, regional, and national arenas. You can:

1. **Contact your association.** Share your interest in service-learning, tell your story, ask for information.
2. **Read service-learning articles in the educational media.** Discuss them with colleagues and others at faculty meetings, with parents, or at school/community events.
3. **Write for association publications,** especially those of which you are a member. You can submit articles to local, state, or national publications.
4. **Develop and pilot workshops or speeches** about your service-learning program for state or national conferences. Check the conference schedules of associations and others.
5. **Collect data about your program.** Quantify the benefits of your program, e.g., the number of hours of service, evidence of learning. Present the data in talks, articles, or workshops.
6. **Petition your school board or state legislature** to address service-learning. Work with association state relations contacts.
7. **Connect service-learning to standards-based learning.** Review standards documents to see where service-learning aligns.

Contact Information for Associations

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)

1307 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005-4701
Phone: (202) 293-2450 Fax: (202) 457-8095
Web Site: www.aacte.org

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)

1801 N. Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (703) 528-0700 Fax: (703) 528-2146
Web Site: www.aasa.org

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 879-4400 Fax: (202) 879-4537
Web Site: www.aft.org

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

1703 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311-1714
Phone: (703) 578-9600 Fax: (703) 575-5400
Web Site: www.ascd.org

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-1431
Phone: (202) 408-5505 Fax: (202) 408-8072
Web Site: www.ccsso.org

Council of Great City Schools (CGCS)

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 702
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 393-2427 Fax: (202) 393-2400
Web Site: www.cgcs.org

Education Commission of the States (ECS)

707 17th Street, Suite 2700
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: (303) 299-3600 Fax: (303) 296-8332
Web Site: www.ecs.org

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (800) 386-2377 Fax: (800) 396-2377
Web Site: www.naesp.org

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

1904 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
Phone: (703) 860-0200 Fax: (703) 476-5432
Web Site: www.nassp.org

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)

277 South Washington Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22324
Phone: (703) 684-4000 Fax: (703) 636-2313
Web Site: www.nasbe.org

National Educational Association (NEA)

1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 822-7482 Fax: (202) 822-7974
Web Site: www.nea.org

National Middle School Association (NMSA)

4151 Executive Pkwy, Suite 300
Westerville, OH 43081
Phone: (614) 895-4730 Fax: (614) 895-4750
Web Site: www.nmsa.org

National Staff Development Council (NSDC)

P.O. Box 240
Oxford, OH 45056
Phone: (513) 523-6029 Fax: (513) 523-0638
Web Site: www.nsd.org

National School Boards Association (NSBA)

1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 838-6722 Fax: (703) 683-7590
Web Site: www.nsba.org

★ *Learning In Deed: Making a Difference Through Service-Learning, an initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is a \$13 million four-year, national initiative to broaden the use of service experiences linked to classroom instruction—known as service-learning—in school districts across America. The Kellogg Foundation believes that meaningful service to the community, combined with curriculum-based learning, builds stronger academic skills, encourages lifelong civic commitment, and improves workplace and personal development skills among youth. Working with teachers, administrators, community leaders, parents, students, policymakers and national leaders, the Kellogg Foundation aims to make service-learning a common teaching practice across America. For more information about the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Service-Learning Initiative, call (202)-778-1040 or visit our Web site at www.learningindeed.org. For general service-learning information, contact the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at 1-(800)-808-SERVE or www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu.*

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A full bibliography of all sources cited here is available at www.learningindeed.org or by contacting Dorothea Wheeler at Education Development Center, Inc., 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02458

